Wiltshire Council

Area Board Briefing Note
FACT Transitional Safeguarding Project

Service:	*Families and Children's Transformation (FACT)*
Date prepared:	**August 2024**
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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Transitional Safeguarding is an "*approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children's and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives*" (Chief Social Workers Knowledge Briefing June (2021)).

In response to multiple partners identifying opportunities for improvement in how we support young people who are vulnerable in the context of criminal and/or sexual exploitation as they move between services at age 18, the Families and Children's Transformation (FACT) Partnership is undertaking a specific project to explore how strategic and operational systems and practice can be developed. The project is specifically exploring the concept of achieving better outcomes for this cohort of young people through a programme of culture, practice and system change rather than a structural change model. National evidence tells us that failure to effectively support young people in this transition to adulthood impacts significantly upon their future outcomes as well as increasing the cost of interventions later in life that are felt across a wide range of system partners including Adult Social Care, Housing, Police, Justice System, Health partners and the welfare benefits system.

The multi-agency project has been running for 20 months with an initial focus on seeking to understand the lived experience of the young people and how the whole system works in the context of young people's support arrangements before, at and after the point they turn 18.

SUMMER 2024 UPDATE

As the project now moves towards closure in April 2025, the focus has shifted to identifying and implementing opportunities for improvement. This phase of activity is informed by case reviews, learning from cases that have been explored at the Creative Solutions Board during the period to date as well as the learning from cases considered within the Early Planning for Transitions activity. There has also been significant insight gained from engagement activity with young people, review of the Transitional Safeguarding mentoring programme and wider dialogue with a range of system partners about their experiences of working with young people in Wiltshire. We are also involved in a number of national networks exploring this issue and seeking to enhance approaches across the country.

The multi-agency activity has identified four key themes going forward.

Theme 1 - How the system can provide effective post-18 support for young people who have received intensive support prior to their 18th birthday

The project is working closely with Adult Social Care to enhance the existing post-18 support arrangements and to ensure that young people who require support from Adult Social Care experience a well-planned and smooth transition that leads to them being able to access appropriate support whilst also ensuring robust safeguarding oversight.

The project is also exploring the commissioning of housing provision with support specifically informed by the needs and vulnerabilities identified within the project.

Implementation of these developments will not just involve Adults Social but will require wider partner engagement and will need to be flexible and responsive to take account of the fluidity in young people's lives.

Intended impact

Success in this theme will mean that more young people are able to access effective post-18 support that enables them to achieve positive outcomes such as engagement in work and learning and reduced homelessness. The need for crisis-related support from across the system will also be reduced.

Theme 2 – How the system can best support young people with Special Education Needs/Disability (SEND) who are also vulnerable to exploitation

The project is facilitating conversation with colleagues from the Council's SEND Services, Social Care and pre/post-16 education providers to explore opportunities to ensure the support for these young people is as joined up and robust as possible taking account of the additional vulnerability and risks.

Intended impact
The key outcomes related to this theme are that fewer young people will drop out of post-16 work and learning and those that do will be picked up and supported to re-engage at an earlier stage.

Theme 3 – How the system partners can best work together to share information related to risk and vulnerability so that a shared assessment of risk is in place for each young person

This strand of work is in its exploratory phase with focussed conversations taking place with Police and Social Care colleagues, utilising case reviews to inform future recommendations and developments.

Intended impact

Improved sharing of information and consistency of assessment of risk will mean that partners will have a shared understanding of our most vulnerable young people and be able to respond more effectively when intervention is required. This will also enable consistency of support and response when young people move across and between services and parts of the system.

Theme 4 – How we can ensure that planning for transition from pre-18 to post-18 services is well-planned and effective

Informed by feedback from professionals and young people as well as case review activity, the project is working closely with Children's Social Care to embed best practice regarding planning for transition where contextual risks are present.

Intended impact

This theme is seeking to ensure that individual young people's needs, risks and vulnerabilities are well understood by relevant pre-18 and post-18 services so that transfer of support is as smooth as possible and that the risk of young people either disengaging from support or 'slipping through the net' are reduced.